



DECISION MEMORANDUM
FEATHER RIVER ABANDONED MINE CLOSURES, 2018
FEATHER RIVER RANGER DISTRICT
PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST
U.S. FOREST SERVICE

BACKGROUND

These abandoned mines currently pose a safety and health risk to the public. There are open adits, surrounded by unstable rock and possibly trash at some sites. Within the underground workings, unstable rock, rotting timbers, rusting metal, bad air, low oxygen levels, deep water, and other unknown hazards may exist. Bat habitat may also be present in the mines.

PROPOSED PROJECT NAME AND LOCATION

FRRD Abandoned Mine Closures – 2018, SOPA Project: 54025. Four abandoned mine sites are proposed for 2019 treatment: Center 5, T19N, R6E, Section 5; Quartz, T19N, R6E, Section 4; Gould, T19N, R6E, Section 5; and Morningside, T19N, R6E, Section 3. All are located in Butte County, California.

PROPOSED PROJECT ACTION AND DESCRIPTION

The following actions were proposed to close these abandoned mines:

- Center 5 adit, install a culvert style bat gate
- Quartz adit, install a polyurethane foam plug into the portal
- Gould adit, install a polyurethane foam plug into the portal
- Morningside adit, install a culvert style bat gate

PURPOSE OF ACTION

To improve the health, safety, and resource conditions of the sites.

NEED FOR ACTION

Project meets national interagency (BLM/Forest Service) efforts to reclaim abandoned mine lands sites to minimize the environmental, human health, and safety hazards at abandoned mines, while preserving the historic and wildlife habitat resources that they provide.

COLLABORATIVE INVOLVEMENT

This action was presented at meetings of the Butte County Forest Advisory Committee and the Feather River Ranger District Collaborative.

TRIBAL INVOLVEMENT

Tribes were invited to participate in the development, review, and implementation of proposed project. No interest was indicated in this project.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was listed as a proposal on the Plumas National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA), as well as the Feather River Ranger District 10 year Strategic Plan and Forest Program of Work (POW). The project was updated and revised incorporating current project development design features, involving public input, using specific resource specialists for review and analysis.

ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

Given the project brief, project initiation notice, stakeholder input, public scoping comments and follow up information a comprehensive review and analysis was done of this project by the FRRD IDT. The review and analysis for botany and noxious weed risk assessment as well as the screened undertaking for heritage are incorporated into the project record.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

As the responsible official, I am responsible for evaluating the effects of the project relative to the definition of significance established by the CEQ Regulations (40 CFR 1508.13). I have found that the Context and intensity of the analyzed resource areas do not meet the threshold nor the criteria for extraordinary circumstances or potential negative or significant effects in the area of potential effect.

RESULTS OF REVIEW AND ANALYSIS - FINDINGS

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – based on results from site assessments, implementation of the project will not affect any threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive

species.

- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – none are present.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – none are present.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – none are present.
- Research natural areas – none are present.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – there are no known American Indian religious or cultural sites within the project area.
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – the project is a screened undertaking (class B) according to the provisions of the Regional PA (USDA Forest Service 2018c). No standard protection measures are required and the project may be implemented without further review or consultation.

DECISION

I have decided to approve the project as set forth below with modifications based on site visits and review:

- Center 5 adit, based on review the rock does not appear competent enough to support a gate or culvert type gate instead, allow to continue to collapse on its own while monitoring for public safety concerns;
- Quartz adit, install a gate rather than a polyurethane foam plug;
- Gould adit, shows sign of use by non-wildlife species while potential hazards are mitigated by the steepness of slope and cover of brush, take no action at this time; and
- Morningside adit, install a culvert style bat gate.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, 31.2(8): short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction or less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.” This category of action(s) is applicable because closing abandoned mines for purposes of health and safety is an activity carried out routinely by the agency.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Plumas National Forest Land Management Plan as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment.



ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES


This Decision does not provide for any “appeal” or “objection” opportunities. All public and stakeholder input was received and considered during the FRRD collaborative process for this project. Once this Decision is signed the project or proposed action may be implemented immediately, notwithstanding any other law or regulation from another agency that would preclude its immediate implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND REQUIREMENTS

This action may be implemented immediately.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Donna Duncan at the Feather River Ranger District, 875 Mitchell Avenue, Oroville, CA 95966, telephone 530-534-6500.


David B. Brillenz
District Ranger

5 Feb 19

Date

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